

CORPS' PONDENT

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US Army Corps
of Engineers
Portland District



**Always wear a life jacket
whenever you plan to be on
or around the water**



May - June 2011



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Commander: Col. Steven R. Miles, P.E.
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“Here’s to You”

It has been an honor and privilege to serve as your Commander and District Engineer for the past three years.

Words alone do not adequately convey the respect and admiration I have for all of you, the professionals of the Portland District.

I am amazed every day by the impacts and outputs you produce for the people and the economy of the Pacific Northwest and across the country.

I have learned so much by being on this great team – our team – and am grateful for your passion to share. I have learned the complexity of our mission sets, our authorized purposes and business lines. You taught me how our actions have second and third order effects and how they are all connected by a web of relationships and how we must truly understand how to balance competing requirements to be successful. I have learned it is all about having good relationships, constructive dialogue and a willingness to compromise to move forward.

I have learned of your remarkable technical expertise, your skills and knowledge and your positive attitude. You are selfless and devoted and I am so proud to have stood in your ranks.

I have learned about your persistence and perseverance that demonstrates your determination to overcome daunting tasks across the full spectrum of our mission, ultimately bringing many benefits to this region and security to its citizens.

You manage big, city-size, aging operating projects which have

required significant repairs and upgrades during my tenure with you. You’ve replaced navigation lock gates on our Columbia River dams to keep river traffic and the economy flowing and you’ve made repairs to spillway gates in the Willamette Valley to reduce flood risks and to protect the public.

You’ve also improved navigation for economic development and safety by deepening the Columbia River and by operating, maintaining and repairing our jetties, most notably at the mouth of the Columbia River and at Tillamook.

Environmentally, you’ve been careful and thorough as you’ve issued complex regulatory permits and you have been equally vigilant with endangered species issues from your protection of endangered butterflies around Fern Ridge to charting new territory of juvenile passage at our high head dams. You’ve been good stewards as you’ve restored aquatic ecosystems around Oregon and southwest Washington, such those at Springfield Mill Race or at Amazon Creek or even through notching Elk Creek Dam to restore fish habitat and passage.

I have learned you are willing to go to the edge. You are expeditionary whenever and wherever the mission requires. You’ll go to the high seas aboard our dredges, you’ll deploy to the eye of the storm during natural disasters both at home and abroad, and you’ll deploy to war zones to rebuild other countries. You’ve actively inspected turbine production in foreign countries and you’ve traveled to third-world countries to build their capacity by sharing your expertise and GIS training.



Col. Steven R. Miles, P.E.

I have learned from you all. You are an incredible team of professionals, all of whom have a great reputation.

One of the things that I have learned (and can count on) in my twenty-six years of service in the Army, is that “The Army” and “The Army Corps” will go rolling along, just like the Army songs tell us. The mission continues and we adapt and change, as needed, leveraging future opportunities to meet the challenges that lie ahead.

A big lesson that I’ve learned during the past several months, is that I will miss you, the people, who make up our District Corps family, the most. You have been great colleagues, teachers and friends.

From my family to your family—thanks for Building Strong and being Army Strong.

God Bless and God Bless America from a grateful Commander,

COL Miles 





Help share the Corps' message



SHARING THE MESSAGE

SHARING THE MESSAGE



Understanding coastal jetties

Just as bridges provide safe passage over rivers, gorges or other depressions, jetties help ocean-going vessels move between coastal rivers and the Pacific Ocean. Jetties were never intended to be used for recreational purposes. Some of their dangers are visible, others are hidden:

- ◆ Sudden larger waves, even in calm weather, can knock a person off balance or into the water.
- ◆ Waves and strong currents near the jetty can prevent safe recovery after a fall into the water.
- ◆ Open crevasses and sinkholes between large boulders create stepping hazards.
- ◆ Slippery rock surfaces are caused by sea spray.
- ◆ Caverns within the structure, caused by the eroding of stones and sand, could be hidden below a thin surface and suddenly collapse.

MESSAGE: *Jetties were never intended to be used for recreational purposes. Stay off the jetties.*



Spillway gate videos broaden flood risk awareness

A four-segment video series, entitled "Willamette Valley Dams: A System in Repair," highlights safety inspections and the actions underway to reduce flood risks through the period of gate repairs and upgrades. The videos will build public awareness of our primary missions in the Willamette River basin and the situation with the spillway gates at 11 of our 13 Willamette Valley dams.

Two-dimensional graphics, interviews and footage of the dams and repairs clearly and simply explain complex safety, water management and engineering topics important to downstream communities. One video outlines actions residents can take to prepare themselves and their homes for floods.

The videos are available for community groups, schools and other organizations by calling the Willamette Valley Project Office at 541-937-2131. The public can view the four segments through these websites:

<http://www.nwp.usace.army.mil/>

<http://www.youtube.com/PortlandCorps>

MESSAGE: *While the Corps repairs spillway gates, it's important for Willamette Valley residents to understand their flood risks and take personal action to help protect lives and property.*

Why are life jacket loaner stations important?

According to Corps national recreation statistics, 96 percent of drowning victims would be alive today if they had worn a life jacket. To reduce the risk for those in or around the water in Oregon, the Portland District maintains life jacket loaner stations at a number of its recreation areas. You'll find them at:

COLUMBIA RIVER:

- ◆ Plymouth Park swim beach (Washington)
- ◆ Plymouth Park boat ramp (Washington)
- ◆ LePage Park swim beach (Oregon)
- ◆ LePage Park boat ramp (Oregon)
- ◆ Hamilton Island boat ramp at Bonneville Lock and Dam (Washington)

WILLAMETTE VALLEY:

- ◆ Richardson Park boat ramp, Fern Ridge Lake
- ◆ Pine Meadows Campground swim beach, Cottage Grove Lake
- ◆ Lakeside boat launch, Cottage Grove Lake
- ◆ Schwarz Campground, Dorena Lake

ROGUE RIVER BASIN:

- ◆ Takelma Park boat ramp, Lost Creek Lake
- ◆ Stewart State Park, Lost Creek Lake

MESSAGE: *Wearing your life jacket is the single most important lifesaving action that you can take to protect yourself and your family.*



Always wear a life jacket whenever you plan to be on or around the water. If a loaner board station is not available at the area you are visiting, bring one from home, borrow one or buy one, but be sure that it is U.S. Coast Guard approved with an appropriate label designation inside.


FASTEN ALL BUCKLES AND CLASPS AND ENSURE WEAR IS SNUG.

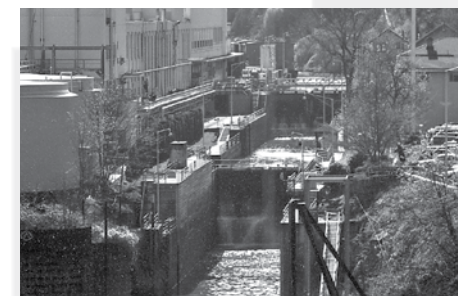
Willamette Falls Locks remain closed in 2011

The Willamette Falls Locks on the Willamette River at West Linn, Ore., are closed to public use in 2011.

Maintenance crews will try to accommodate a small number of commercial lockages that coincide with regularly-scheduled maintenance activities, and lockages requested by proper authorities to deal with emergency situations.

The Corps has been able to operate and maintain the locks for limited public use the past few years only due to special Congressional funding above the regular budget allocation. Obtaining funding for future commercial and public operation of the locks will continue to be a challenge.

MESSAGE: *While the lock remains closed, we understand the importance of Willamette Falls Locks to the local community and continue to meet regularly with federal, state, county and city officials; industry representatives; and others to identify potential solutions for both operations and long-term reliability.* 



Corps of Engineers photos



Regulatory Lessons Learned

REGULATORY LESSONS LEARNED

By Michelle Helms, Public Affairs Office

A little more than a year ago the Portland District Regulatory Branch determined they could better accomplish their public service mission through intentional outreach and education, and that one way to do it was to take a road trip.

“Taking the Regulatory program out to stakeholders is a great way to explain what we do and to help people better understand our program,” said Kevin Moynahan, Regulatory Branch chief.

After several months of planning, Moynahan, project managers and section chiefs traveled to Medford and Salem, Ore., to spend time with nearly 200 people who need, or will need, Department of Army permits.

A permit is required for any project that involves placing dredge or fill materials in waters of the United States, including wetlands, and for any work in, over or under navigable waters. These projects range from building bridges to installing a culvert to repairing a fishing dock.

The laws outlining the protection of the nation’s aquatic resources can be confusing and Regulatory project managers realize that applying for a permit can be somewhat overwhelming.

“We believe these workshops will help people understand our processes and lead to more complete applications,” said Amanda Dethman, Regulatory



Corps of Engineers photo

The Corps of Engineers’ Regulatory mission is to protect the Nation’s aquatic resources, while allowing reasonable development through fair, flexible and balanced permit decisions.

project manager and outreach coordinator.

For the Corps, improved applications mean the review process is more effective and

efficient, which helps people get their projects built.

Another benefit of the outreach was the opportunity to meet the people the Corps serves. Some of the people who attended the workshops have applied for permits in the past, but much of that communication happened over the phone or via e-mail. Presenters and attendees alike expressed their appreciation for the face-to-face contact.

“It was an opportunity to show that we are knowledgeable, professional and caring people,” said James Holm, Regulatory project manager and workshop presenter.

“I really appreciated the personal connection,” said Juna Hickner, Coastal



Photo by Michelle Helms, Public Affairs Office

Shelly Schmidt, project manager for the Portland District LaGrande, Ore. field office presents an overview of the Regulatory program to people who attended the workshop May 5, in Medford, Ore.

State-Federal Relations Coordinator, Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development. "I've found that those types of connections often lead to stronger professional collaboration."

The workshops are just one piece of the Regulatory Branch's outreach plan. The team also produced a video giving an overview of the Corps' permit application process; they are working with a contractor to put the finishing touches on an online training module; and, based on feedback from workshop attendees, are considering workshops that focus on specific topics, such as mitigation.

Attendees say they appreciate the opportunity to learn more about the Corps' Regulatory program.

"The workshop helped solidify my understanding of all the different factors that go into the Corps' permit determinations," said Hickner.



Photo by Michelle Helms, Public Affairs Office

Tabletop displays are part of the Regulatory outreach efforts to educate the public about their programs and the laws that govern the Corps' role in aquatic and environmental protection. Photo by Michelle Helms, Public Affairs Office

"As a natural resource specialist and project manager, it is essential to stay informed on changes to federal and state regulatory programs," said Ed Emerick, natural resources specialist for the city of Salem.

Dethman says this experience gave her a keen sense of how important it is to set aside time to educate the public about the Corps' permitting program.


"I better understand the value of getting feedback about our programs from the public, particularly in areas where they have lots of questions and concerns, or need guidance on new and changing issues."

While the goal of the workshop was outreach, there were some internal benefits, too.

"I have benefited in a number of ways," said Tom Taylor, Regulatory project manager and workshop presenter. "I learned more about portions of

the regulations that I don't have as much experience with, and I polished my speaking skills."

Dethman said she was most surprised by what she learned while planning the road shows.

"This was a great team-building and bonding experience as a branch," she said. "I gained an even greater sense of respect, admiration and appreciation for the team I work alongside but don't often have the opportunity work with." 

Regulatory quiz:

1. What are the two primary activities regulated by the Corps' Regulatory Branch?

(Answer: Placement of dredge or fill material in waters of the United States (including wetlands); any work in/over/under navigable waters.)

2. What are three characteristics of a wetland?

(Answer: Contains soils that are saturated or flooded during some parts of most years and contains vegetation adapted for moist soil conditions, such as bulrush, cattails, rushes, sedges, willows, etc. Surface water or saturation also is present during some part of the growing season.)

3. Name three state or federal agencies the Corps works with to protect the Nation's aquatic resources.

(Answer: Oregon Department of Environmental Quality; National Marine Fisheries Service; National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration; Oregon Department of State Lands)

4. What are the primary authorities (laws) that govern the work done by Regulatory?

(Answer: Clean Water Act; Rivers and Harbors Act)





Seismic evidence shifts engineering

Portland District's Dam Safety Program sorts the data



By Amy Echols, Public Affairs Office

At its intersection, natural science and engineering create useful structures from earthly matter and energy. Observe the dams that generate hydropower and jetties that enable safer navigation. But nature can literally shake up the world, compelling engineers and scientists to revise their road maps.

Seismology, the relatively new science that studies earthquakes and the composition and condition of our planet's interior, has been remarkably dynamic since the early 1960s. Moreover, the revolutionary and emergent theory of plate tectonics (simply, the moving of Earth's crustal plates) exposes vast new evidence and tests scientific assumptions about our natural and built world.



Photo courtesy of U.S. Geological Survey

The 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake left cracks in the concrete spillway of Austrian Dam, located about 2,000 feet northeast of the San Andreas fault zone in Santa Clara County, Calif. Spillway and earthwork repairs were essentially complete in about an 8-week period.



Photo courtesy of U.S. Geological Survey

Cougar Dam in the Willamette Valley stands 452 feet high and holds of enough water when full to cover 219,000 acres of land in 1 foot of water (that's 219,000 acre-feet). The 1,600 foot-long rockfill structure with a gated concrete spillway passed recent Portland District seismic inspections.

Earth's dynamics in the Pacific Northwest are undeniable as active volcanoes run north to south and rivers flow through canyons carved deep by ice and floods. They also influence important work in Portland District where evaluating potential seismic impacts on 20 Corps dams is not new, but it is very complex and evolutionary.

Matt Craig, manager of Portland District's Dam Safety Program, explains that first, the natural sciences are influenced by Earth's changes and, over time, engineers apply this evolving knowledge to their disciplines and new seismic data further expand dam safety complexities.

"The 692 dams that the Corps operates were built to the best design standards of the day, using the best available seismic information we had at that time," adds Don Chambers, chief of Portland District's Engineering and

Construction Division. "We knew that each structure, depending on its composition – concrete, earth fill, rock fill or a combination – and specific site characteristics, could respond very differently to earthquakes."

Chambers affirms that dam failures resulting directly from earthquakes are rare. Corps engineers use lessons learned from other dam incidents around the world to define improvements to the Dam Safety Program. "We evaluate what we've done and what we can do better."

Details from research on the Cascadia Subduction Zone (off the Pacific Coast from British Columbia to northern California) gained scientific credibility during the 1970s and provided reliable clues that earthquakes of magnitudes exceeding previous expectations are possible. A Portland District plan from the early 1990s spurred the incorporation of this expanded seismic knowledge into the Dam Safety Program. Among many outcomes of this plan, engineers revised evaluation factors for Northwestern Division dams.



Corps of Engineers photo

Strong motion detectors at most Portland District dams collect data on the movement of the Earth's surface and on the actual performance of a structure during an earthquake. USGS typically gathers and analyzes data.

Craig explains that securing funding to apply the latest science, update monitoring and research technologies and conduct risk analyses at individual dams based on new information is a challenge.

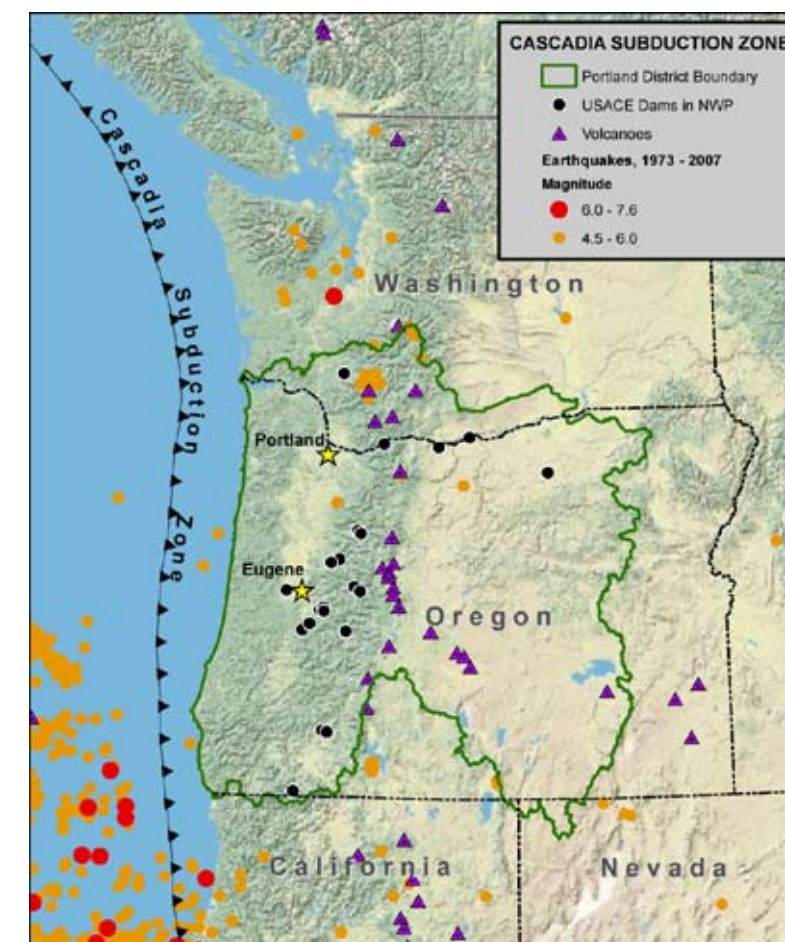
"Seismicity, however, is just one of the many safety and risk factors

we consider in our Dam Safety Program," states Craig. "We also look at other risk factors such as seepage, reliability of critical project systems, stability and the potential for overtopping to ensure that we can safely operate our dams."

Strong motion instruments to detect movement of the earth's

surface and collect information on the actual performance of a structure during an earthquake are in place around the District.

The Corps uses a simple evaluation system to determine their level of response and inspection after earthquakes. For minor earthquakes that cause no apparent



Corps of Engineers photo

The Cascadia Subduction Zone is a region that runs 600 miles from northern California to southern British Columbia. Within this zone is the Cascadia fault, the boundary between two of the Earth's tectonic plates: the smaller offshore Juan de Fuca plate that is sliding under the much larger North American plate. The largest known earthquake in the "lower 48" states rocked this region Jan. 26, 1700. This and similar plate tectonic action influences nearly all geologic processes and confirms that the entire Earth's surface is continually shifting.

Continued on page 10



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significant damage, the Corps makes an immediate inspection for damage or disturbances. Notification to the District Commander is sufficient if inspectors detect no or only minor damage.

A more complex sequence of inspections, notifications and corrective actions begins following

a quake with obvious shaking of buildings and other indicators. The possibility of misalignment or cracking of concrete structures, abutments or foundations of a dam's hydropower units, regulating outlets or spillway gates propels a District response.

Craig explains: "Assessments also consider U.S. Geological Survey magnitude data, information from Corps motion instruments, previous evaluation data and maps indicating a dam's proximity to a quake's epicenter and fault."

A dam with structural deficiencies from seismic or other issues that presents a high probability of failure and poses significant risks to downstream populations typically receives further study. Depending on results, the project may then be considered nationally for a "worst first" prioritization for retrofit, repair or rehabilitation. These corrective actions consider current seismic information and apply updated seismic standards.

"Safety remains our top priority even when risks to public safety are low," states Chambers. "We reduce known risks and move forward on investigations with the resources at hand, eventually making our way toward permanent repairs."

Meanwhile, engineers implement actions to reduce those risks (such as lowering water levels in reservoirs) until longer-term repairs


are in place. The Corps, state and county emergency management agencies coordinate with each other to maintain an appropriate level of preparedness.

"It's in an engineer's responsibility to hypothesize about outcomes related to structures they build," Chambers summarizes. "The world certainly would look different if we had the ability to predict where and how natural forces will interact with our work."

"With increased attention on the Cascadia Subduction Zone, this region is now targeted as the likely place for the next "Big One," an earthquake of potentially catastrophic magnitude," continues

Chambers. "Most District dams are far enough inland that the zone is not highly likely to pose an extreme threat."

The importance of understanding our dynamic and ever-changing Earth is not a mystery in the engineering field, or in the many sciences linked to nature.

As sure as observation validates solutions, seismology proves that one road on a map can quickly fork off to a new one – all while our planet's crust keeps moving. 

Earthquakes and interactive Internet tools

Did you feel it?

<http://earthquake.usgs.gov/earthquakes/dyfi/>

The magnitude and location of earthquakes have been available within minutes on the Internet since the early 1990s. Now, as a result of work by the U.S. Geological Survey, in cooperation with various regional seismic networks, you can share information online about an earthquake you felt and its effects. This helps create a map of shaking intensities and damage. These Community Internet Intensity Maps contribute greatly toward the quick assessment of the scope of an earthquake emergency and provide valuable data for earthquake research.

Sign up for earthquake notification

<https://ssleearthquake.usgs.gov/ens/help>

The U.S.G.S. Earthquake Hazards Program Earthquake Notification Service is a free service that sends you automated notification e-mails when magnitude 6.0 or greater earthquakes happen in your area. Information for U.S. earthquakes is generally available within 5 minutes; information for earthquakes elsewhere in the world is generally available within 30 minutes.

Explore earthquake history

<http://earthquake.usgs.gov/learn/topics/?topicID=46>

Enter a month and day to research seismic activity around the world on that day. For example, on May 19, 1940, a magnitude 7.1 (Richter) earthquake in southern California caused a few feet of horizontal land movement that offset part of the international boundary between the United States and Mexico.

Water safety stressed this summer



By Melissa Rinehart, Natural Resource Management

While enjoying the summer at Corps recreation sites around the region everyone is reminded to use extra caution while in or around the water. Most reservoirs will be full most of the summer and rivers will run cold and high as snow melt continues well into summer. Rivers and lakes also may contain floating or submerged debris that is not always visible from the surface.

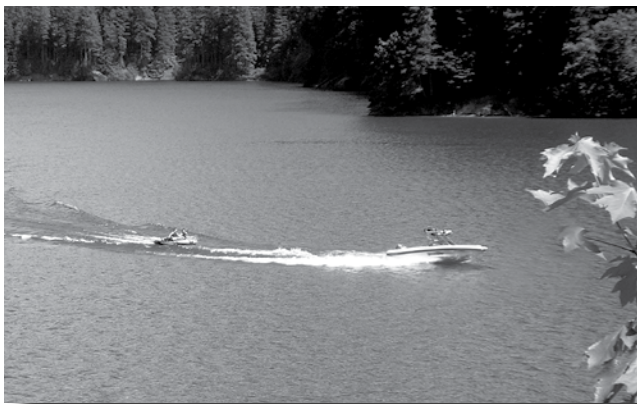
"If you plan to swim or go boating, remember: always wear a life jacket, make sure the water is safe to enter, use the buddy system and watch for signs of hypothermia," cautions Col. Steven R. Miles, Portland District Commander. "And, don't consume alcohol around the water – it's a dangerous combination that could lead to especially tragic results."

Be sure everyone in your group follows these safety tips to ensure a safer recreation experience

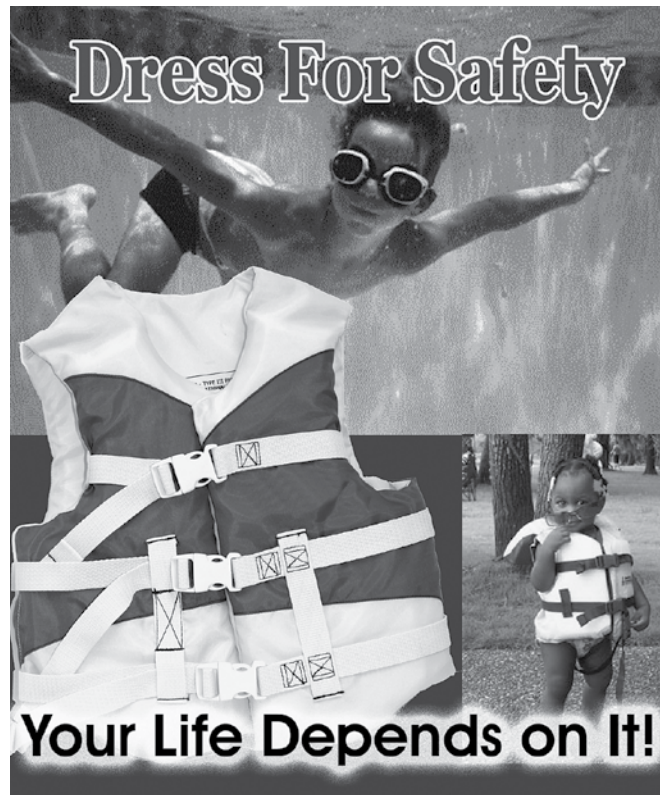
◆ **Wear your life jacket:** Each year about 4,000 people drown in the United States. This is the second leading cause of accidental deaths for persons 15 to 44 years of age. The majority of these tragedies could have been prevented by wearing a life jacket.

◆ **Learn to swim well:** Don't overestimate your skill. Once you know how to swim, always swim with a buddy. Don't rely on inner tubes or water toys to keep you afloat. Know your limits.

◆ **Beware of cold water:** Cold-water immersion can cause hypothermia and usually results in an automatic 'gasp' reflex (which can be fatal if you're not wearing your life jacket). Hypothermia occurs when the body loses heat faster than it can produce it. This can happen in any season; in the Pacific Northwest, water temperatures are low all year.



Corps of Engineers photo



◆ **Don't drink and boat:** About half of adolescent and adult deaths associated with water recreation involve alcohol use. This is about one in five reported boating fatalities. Just one beer can impair your balance, vision, judgment and reaction time. Don't include alcohol in your outing if you are planning to have fun in, on, or near the water.

For more information on these and other water safety tips, visit the Corps' water safety website at <http://watersafety.usace.army.mil/safetytips.htm>.



WATER SAFETY



CORPS INSTALLS UNIQUE SOLUTION TO WILLOW CREEK VEGETATION PROBLEM

By Scott Clemans, Public Affairs Office

Is it an animal, vegetable or mineral? Willow Creek Dam has been looking more like the second than the third lately, but that's about to change.

The roller-compacted concrete dam near Heppner, Ore., was completed in 1983 to provide flood damage reduction, irrigation and recreation benefits to the local area. Shallow-rooted vegetation, mostly grasses and aquatic plants, have been growing on the dam's face and spillway for many years.

Although unsightly, the District's Dam Safety team concluded that the plants do not pose a hazard to the dam's structural integrity.

But members of the local community aren't convinced, and want them removed. Elizabeth Hall, technical lead for the District's Small Projects Initiative, said that one local resident's ire was so high that she contacted her congressional representative, who obtained a commitment from the District to address the problem.

Not that the John Day/Willow Creek Project hadn't been trying before.

"Vegetation control on the dam is something the Corps has always tried to accomplish, but the right equipment was not in place to do a thorough job," said Willow Creek Dam Park Ranger Dan Dunnett. "Contractors have sprayed the face of the dam with herbicide twice a year, but could never reach a significant part the growth with the equipment they had."



Willow Creek Dam vegetation.

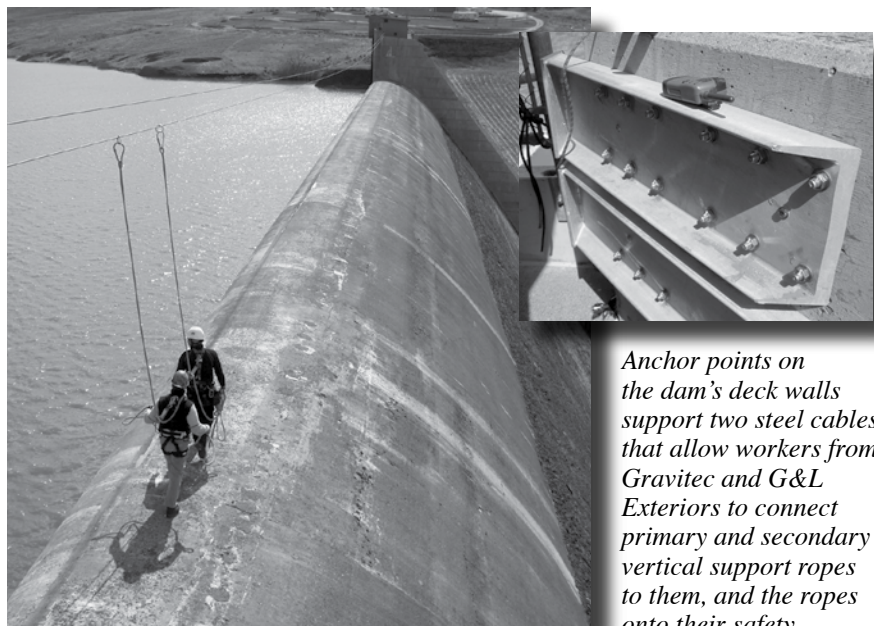
Corps of Engineers photo

Enter Gravitec Systems of Bainbridge Island, Wash.

"These guys are the experts in fall protection," said District Safety Officer Dave Stanton. "They're the ones you go to when you need a solution to a problem like this."

Stanton ought to know. He's technical lead for the Corps' Fall Protection Task Force.

Gravitec designed and installed permanent horizontal lifelines that span the entire width of the dam's spillway. Anchor points on the dam's deck walls support two steel cables well above high water level. Workers connect primary and secondary vertical support ropes onto those cables, and the ropes onto their safety harnesses.



Anchor points on the dam's deck walls support two steel cables that allow workers from Gravitec and G&L Exteriors to connect primary and secondary vertical support ropes to them, and the ropes onto their safety harnesses.

Photo by Dave Stanton, Safety Office

Workers can use the vertical ropes to rappel down the face of the dam with backpack sprayers, applying herbicide to areas they've never been able to reach before. To allow workers to access other parts of the dam, Gravitec also designed and fabricated a custom connection that fastens to a truck trailer hitch.

"This fall protection system is pretty unique because it spans the entire spillway – we've never done that before anywhere in the Northwestern Division that I know of," said Stanton.

He also emphasized that the total contract cost of about \$127,000 bought the District a permanent, professionally-engineered system that can be used repeatedly in the future by contractors, dam safety inspectors and the John Day/Willow Creek Project's structural crew.

G&L Exteriors of Estacada, Ore., won the contract to apply the herbicide, but had no experience with this sort of work, said Stanton. So Gravitec held both in-office and on-site training sessions to bring G&L's employees up to speed on rappelling techniques, as well as self- and buddy-rescue procedures.

Gravitec will also train District employees who might need to use the system in the future.

The actual application of herbicide will take place later this spring when wind and other weather conditions permit, Hall said.

The types of herbicide to be used have been closely coordinated with the state Department of Agriculture and do not pose a significant health risk to people or animals in the area. Areas sprayed with such chemicals are safe to enter as soon as the herbicide dries.

In any case, the actual application area on the face of Willow Creek Dam is not accessible to the public.

The herbicides are approved for use in or near domestic, irrigation or recreational water supplies, but former John Day/Willow Creek Operations Project Manager Jerry Carroll said the project plans to lower the level of the small holding basin below the dam during and immediately after the application

to minimize herbicide-to-water contact.


The herbicide should start to have a visible effect within days of application, and soon after that Willow Creek Dam should start looking more mineral than vegetable again. 



Photo by Dave Stanton, Safety Office

Gravitec held both in-office and on-site training sessions to bring G&L Exteriors employees up to speed on rappelling techniques, as well as self- and buddy-rescue procedures.



Photo by Dave Stanton, Safety Office

Employees from Gravitec and from G&L Exteriors of Estacada, Ore., who won the contract to apply the herbicide, learn and practice rappelling techniques.



Corps'pondent: Be a field correspondent

By Erica Jensen, Editor

You've told us you are most interested in hearing from and about your fellow employees in this magazine. So whenever possible, we try to run stories suggested and written by you.

Not the commander, the division and branch chiefs, or Public Affairs. You.

Don't get us wrong – we public affairs specialists try to write articles about people and issues we think the programs and projects want the rest of the District to know.


But there's a lot going on out there.

We want to encourage you to write stories and send in photos about what's going on in your part of the District – about the successes you've achieved, the challenges you've overcome, the fun you've had, the unusual happenings you've been a part of.

We also realize that the idea of writing a story may be intimidating to some. But, it's easier than you think. To take the mystery out of it, Public Affairs will teach you the basics on writing a feature article as well as how to take a good photo.

We've already taught a few new field correspondents the basics of storytelling and are ready to teach more employees who want to share their stories. If that's you, let us know by e-mailing cenwp-pa@usace.army.mil.

Classes can be organized at Robert Duncan Plaza, operating projects and other field sites – wherever there are enough students.

It's your magazine, take the steps to prepare, then tell your story. 

Kites bring smiles to Haiti's kids

By Rick Benoit, Technical Operations Branch

"It's an amazing sight, witnessing how the seemingly simple and benign can bring immense pleasure and profound moments of peace. For the children of Haiti, this is kiting."

Wishing to bring smiles to Haiti's youngest victims of the Jan. 12, 2010, earthquake, members of Operation Unified Response, Joint Task Force Haiti reached back to the United States to ask for donations of kites. Volunteers from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Naval Facility Engineering Command received and distributed more than 500 kites and 150 soccer balls during their deployment.

Spearheading the Corp's kite collection effort in Haiti were Portland District emergency management deployees Jerry Christensen, deputy chief of the Engineering and Construction Branch and dive safety officer Rick Benoit.

Along with Navy NAVFAC and other USACE colleagues, Christensen and Benoit solicited and received, from the U.S. mainland and Portland District employees, kites for delivery in and around Port au Prince, Haiti, to children living in shanty towns, displacement camps and on the streets.

For team members, building and handing out kites and other gifts to Haiti's children provided relief from the daily grind of working 18-hour days, seven days a week.

Additional donations, including school supplies and gift bags, came from school, church and volunteer groups, as well as businesses and individuals across the American landscape, including San Diego, Norwalk, Conn., Brockton, Mass., Bayside, N.Y., and others.

Kiting is
Given the cu

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Photo by Justin Davis, USACE, for Dept. of Defense

and hurricanes as well as its history of poverty and disease, is it any wonder Haitian children take to the skies to find freedom and joy?

To "go fly a kite" Haitian style, first begins on the ground, as these simple toys are usually homemade. Children gather sticks, maybe from under a nearby mango tree, slice them and tie them together into a frame with whatever twine can be found. With the frame complete, next comes the sail and tail, made out of whatever plastic is available, such as a discarded shopping bag. Finally, after the kite is complete, string is gathered to maintain "operational control" and the kite is tossed windward for flight.

Once crafted, these youthful kite makers dance their way through open fields, cramped pathways, or dodge electric power lines above rubble-filled streets in search of flight. With each successful flight, burdens of daily Haitian existence become lost and pure joy beams from an infectious ear-to-ear smile.

The international grassroots effort to collect and donate kites, as one organizer explains, is slowly to not soothe but as many victims Haitian

Van pools benefit our environment and our pockets!

By Chad Stuart, Rogue River Basin Project

Employees of the Portland District are using employer-subsidized van pools to save money and to reduce their carbon footprint.

More than 120 employees from around the District are taking advantage of the incentives, riding in 13 van pools every day to and from work – keeping them off the road and benefiting them personally by reducing wear on their vehicles and saving them money on gas. Just

plant trainer Paul Horvath, now a powerhouse mechanic and van pool rider at the Rogue Basin project.

"The program motivated the benefits of van pools and incentives for federal employees to participate," said Horvath, who was sparked by the ad to do more research.

After learning from the Portland District's Resource Management office that Corps employees are eligible for transit benefits, Horvath started investigating van pool companies that could be used.

"Eventually we found VPSI, Inc., a company that would work with us in any way and who has been around since the 1970s," recalls Horvath.

Currently, VPSI, C-Trip and Enterprise Rent-A-Car provide

vehicles for the Portland District van pools.

"Van pools are easy to organize. After finding four or more employees who want to ride together and securing a van from a company, each rider submits an application for review and approval," said Dave White, who coordinates the program from Resource Management. "One of the riders is also chosen to serve as the van pool's coordinator, who signs the contract with the van rental company, collects travel vouchers and keeps track of billings and reports."

Van pool participants determine their own meeting and driving preferences with some pools designating a single time and place to meet while other pools pick up riders along the way. Some pools

Bikers of Afghanistan support Wounded Warrior Project

By James Edgins, Deployment Office

"Bikins" is a cross operator at The Dallas Link and Link.

When he's not on the job, he's an avid fan of the Harley Davidson motorcycle. He's been riding since 1979, his wife Mike joining him in his hobby in 1984.

Bikins has always enjoyed riding for a cause. He is a member of several groups that support military members and their families, including the Harley Davidson Group, the Washington State American Bikers Aid Toward Education, and the Marine Lodge.

As an Army veteran, Bikins also has supported riding programs for former military members and has been a member of the Pacific Coast Riders for the last few years.

"The PW is a direct collection of riders from across the nation who have one thing in common: bikers motorcycles," said Bikins. "They all have an unspoken respect for those who risk their lives for America's freedom and security."

Bikins deployed in May 2009 to Camp Clark in Khost, Afghanistan, as a construction representative, with maintenance responsibilities for more than 30 buildings and supervising 95 Afghan national workers.

"Time flies, but I still try to find ways to both help veterans and participate in my motorcycle group back home," said Bikins. "One of my proudest moments here was when the PW



Bikins riders raise money from projects for the Wounded Warrior Project during a Memorial Day ride.

The PW's main mission is to attend the funeral services of fallen American heroes as well as provide support to their families. They want their presence to be a sign of their sincere respect for our country's fallen heroes, and they want to shield the remaining family and their friends from any type of protest or harassment. PW also organizes "welcome home rides" and sends the Bikers of Soldiers, Sailors and Airman returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan.

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Continued on page 28

BIKERS OF AFGHANISTAN



Photo courtesy of the Bikers of Afghanistan. From left: Paul Horvath, Richard Belmont, Jean Kien, Chad Stuart, Edward Anderson and Tracy. The Rogue River Basin Project regularly ride in a van pool to and from work.

March - April 2011 Corps'pondent

September - October 2010 Corps'pondent



Neil Saling: Life after the Corps

By Erica Jensen, Public Affairs Office

Neil Saling spent 30 years in the U.S. Army, a combination of both troop and Corps of Engineers time. He served as the Portland District Deputy Commander from 1972 to 1975 before leaving to command the 864th Engineer Battalion at Fort Lewis, Wash. He was also the Corps' deputy commander of the South Pacific Division, district commander of the Alaska District and deputy commander, of the North Pacific Division.

Salings' fondest memories of the Portland District are of noon-time volleyball games on the "asphalt," and of trying to convince old-time residents of North Bonneville to move to new, safe and sanitary homes.

He retired from the Corps in 1988 then started his civilian career, first serving as Director of Construction of the Oregon Convention Center then as a construction manager for Hoffman Construction.



Saling is a charter member of the "Old Colonels Club," an informal group of former Corps of Engineers colonels in the Portland area whose aim, in addition to telling war stories, is to bring their wisdom and experiences to the current crop of Corps leaders in Portland.

The Salings take one "big" trip a year, having already visited Australia, China, New Zealand, Egypt, Russia, Scandinavia, England, Scotland, Ireland, Jordan and the Caribbean. When they're not traveling, they spend half the year in Portland and the other half at their second home in Goodyear, Ariz.

In his spare time, Saling competes in the Masters Track and Field program, throwing the discus and the shot - put - and has ranked, in the discus, in the top two or three position (for his age group) nationally each year.

"I somehow seem to miss the annual retiree luncheon every year," said Saling. "But I do try to make it to the Old Colonels Lunch every once in awhile to catch up with what's going on at the Portland District today."

Do you have a story to share?

If you have a story about your life since leaving the Portland District, we'd like to hear from you. Send an e-mail addressing the points below to cenwp-pa@usace.army.mil, along with a high resolution photo that you'd like to share.

- Name
- City and state where you live now
- How many years were you with the Corps
- Post-retirement career experiences
- Tell us about your travels, hobbies and volunteer efforts
- Tell us about your family

If your story is selected for an upcoming issue, a member of the Public Affairs Office may contact you for more details.





The history of the black beret and other U.S. Army Headgear

Courtesy of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Office of History

As part of its millennium birthday celebration the U.S. Army adopted a new form of headgear, the black beret, June 14, 2001. Ten years later as the U.S. Army and Corps celebrate their 236th birthdays, soldiers still wear the black beret, but it and other hats worn throughout military history have always been significant – standing as a symbol of excellence of the wearer and of the institution they serve.

Military headgear from the past

Officer Pattern Forage Cap

The officer pattern forage cap with the U.S. eagle was meant for field use and was first issued in 1895 to replace the previous Civil War-style forage caps. The Engineer branch was represented by the red and white colors in the band.



Photo Courtesy of Office of History

Dress Helmet

It is thought that the German military victory over France in 1871 influenced the first design of the dress helmet, issued in 1872. The 1881 enlisted model with a spike instead of a plume (which was for mounted soldiers), replaced the 1872 dress cap. It received a mixed reaction—some troops were satisfied with it, while others complained about its weight, the elaborate system of cords and trimmings that extended down over the soldier's shoulders and chest when mounted, and the lack of protection from the elements.



Photo Courtesy of Office of History

To learn more about hats worn by Army Engineers during the past 150 years, visit the Office of History's website at <http://usace.army.mil/History/hv/Pages/031-Headgear.aspx>.

Black Beret

Today, when you see a black Army beret, remember that each hat worn throughout military history was designed with a specific function in mind – but they also have a story to tell – about the institution and the men and women who wore them throughout the years.



Corps of Engineers photo

Berets have been worn by a variety of U.S. Army formations for the past 50 years – airborne, armor, cavalry, infantry, ranger, Special Forces and others.

The black beret consists of a woolen knitted outer shell with a leather sweatband and an adjusting ribbon threaded through the binding. The beret is equipped with a stiffener on the left front for the attachment of organizational flashes and insignia. Officers and warrant officers wear non-subdued grade insignia centered on the beret flash. Enlisted personnel wear their distinctive unit insignia centered on the beret flash. General officers may wear full, medium, or miniature-sized stars on the beret. Stars are worn point-to-point and may be mounted on a bar as an option.